Socialist Worker

Privatisation: Team Workers right to Say No

Workers in Team Aer Lingus have refused to be bullied by management's attempt to privatise the company. The majority of Team Aer Lingus workers were not bought off for the £54.6 million package.

This was despite much media and press sensationalism, and management's threats and intimidation. Team workers made the right decision even though they were under fierce pressure.

The issues of real importance to workers which both management and the government have ignored are:

**Future long term job security in the Danish Multi National, FLS*

**Future pension schemes.*

**Loss of benefits associated with being an airline employee.*

**Over one thousand workers in Team are Aer Lingus staff with legally binding letters signed by the then Minister Seamus Brennan, that seemed to be ignored.*

When you add in the fact that workers in Team are owed monies for the 1993/1994 lockout and incremental and national wage agreements, it meant that workers were actually subsidising their own privatisation!

Now management have responded in the only way they know how, with the threat of winding down the company in four weeks if the majority of staff don't change their minds.

This is a disgrace. Team has nearly a full order book for the next two years and it is due to make a profit this year.

But this issue is not about Team.

It is about the government backed management plan to sell off Aer Lingus itself. The government wants to privatise nearly all of the public sector. ESB, Telecom, Aer Lingus are to be privatised and Mary Harney even talked about privatising the prisons during the election.

Team workers must now resist management's bully boy tactics of intimidation and threats by taking direct action themselves.

The government hopes that if they force Team workers to accept privatisation, then they can force other workers in the public sector to do the same.

DIRECT ACTION THE WAY FORWARD

Team workers should take the first step and take to the streets and begin a loud protest against the threat of privatisation.

If management attempts to lay-off, or attempt to make anyone redundant there should be immediate direct action.

The recent strikes in Air France have shown the way to fight. The French government was trying to cut wages and prepare the way for privatisation. They have taken fright as other workers in the railways and public sector supported the Air France workers.

It's time we followed the French workers example. This right wing government has done nothing for workers. It's more concerned with keeping wages down and their brown paper envelopes from big business.

Neither should we trust Labour or Democratic Left to defend workers interests, they have accepted the so called "logic of the system" and privatisation.

But Team workers have already voted against privatisation. Now is the time to stop Team management and the Government in their tracks.

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